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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8902
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7108
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 8181
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ SEP LIMA 4235
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 9516
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4909
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 3688
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHOND/DIRONDCP WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 008522

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/14/2016
TAGS: KJUS PGOV PHUM PINR PREL PTER CO
SUBJECT: GOC BACKTRACKS: SAYS NO PROOF MILITARY INVOLVED IN
BOGOTA BOMBINGS

REF: BOGOTA 8288

Classified By: Charge D'Affaires Milton K. Drucker.
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) President Uribe clarified on September 10 that the
GOC has no solid evidence tying military officers to a recent
Bogota bombing that killed one civilian, or to several other
bomb plots uncovered in the run-up to Uribe,s August 8
inauguration (see reftel). He said that he and senior GOC
leaders had reviewed the evidence in special meetings of his
National Security Council and did not find evidence of
criminal activity by the military. He assured the public the
investigation would continue, and said the implicated
officers may have been involved in an intelligence operation.
In a September 7 press interview, Army Commander Montoya had,
prior to evidence being reviewed by the MoD, suggested that
military officers were involved in staging the bombing
attempts.

A SKEPTICAL REACTION

¶2. (U) Public and media reaction has been skeptical of the
President,s explanation. A journalist told us the President
was motivated by a desire to quickly assure the public, but
added that Uribe,s comments could backfire if military
involvement is later proved. In the Senate, the opposition
Liberal party subpoenaed &Jessica,8 the demobilized FARC
guerrilla/government spy allegedly involved in the bombing
plot/military intelligence operation. The question of
whether Jessica will testify, which is vigorously opposed by
the GOC, will be considered by the courts.

BEHIND THE SCENES

¶3.   (C) Sources close to President Uribe told us the
initial GOC statements indicating military culpability were
based on Deputy Prosecutor General Jorge Otalora's assertion
to Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos that there was clear
evidence of the officers' involvement. Subsequent military
investigations, however, contradicted Otalora's assertion,

and he later admitted that the Fiscalia had no direct
evidence linking the officers to the crimes. At the
September 10 National Security Council meeting, Santos
vouched for the officers' statements that they were not
involved in any crime, but said the investigation would
continue. GOC officials told us the GOC has no information
contradicting the officers' assertion that they were
conducting an intelligence operation.

¶4. (C) The Office of Regional Affairs confirmed to us that
the officers may have been conducting an intelligence
operation to boost their, and Jessica,s, credibility.
Still, the Fiscalia and police had not been aware of the
operation when they began recording Jessica,s telephone
conversations that ultimately led them to the military
officers. Senior GOC officials said they may never be able
to determine exactly what happened. The incident heightened
army-police tensions, with many army commanders blaming a
senior police official for the original accusatory leak to
the press. Relations between the army and the police,
historically strained, were further exacerbated by the
Jamundi incident in May in which the military killed ten
members of an elite police counter-narcotics unit.

¶5. (C) Senior Colombian officers have asserted the U.S.
Embassy had knowledge of this incident from police sources
prior to the information becoming available to President
Uribe or the Colombian military. Thus implying that the U.S.
Embassy was working with the Colombian police against the
military perhaps leaving a sense that the Colmil was set up.
DRUCKER